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Author(s): Wm. S. Washburn

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A WORTHY EXAMPLE OF THE INFLUENCE OF A STRONG MAN UPON THE DEVELOPMENT OF RACIAL CHARACTER

By Wm. S. Washburn, U. S. Civil Service Commissioner

Almost due north of British Borneo and extending, with an average width of 17 miles, in a northeasterly direction for 240 miles toward the islands of Mindoro and Luzon, lies the splendidly timbered and fertile island of Palawan, between latitude $8^{\circ} 22'$ and $11^{\circ} 25'$ North, and longitude $117^{\circ} 8'$ and $119^{\circ} 40'$ East from Greenwich. Wholly west of and separated from the other islands of the Philippine group by the Sulu sea, it lies more than 400 miles from the Asiatic mainland, and opposite the French possession of Cochinchina, and separated therefrom by the China sea.

In 1902 the Philippine Commission created the province of Paragua (now called Palawan), which included, for administrative purposes, the northern portion of the island of that name and smaller islands on the north and east—the Calamianes and the Cuyos groups, inhabited principally by Christianized Filipinos. Subsequently the province was extended to include southern Paragua, Balabac, and adjacent islands, peopled principally by Moros and other non-Christian tribes, the province thus enlarged being composed of 358 islands.

A first lieutenant of the 29th U. S. Infantry, Edward Y. Miller, having given demonstration of his ability while serving as Secretary-Treasurer and Supervisor of the province of Paragua, was selected as Governor of the province, where the only highways were the rivers and the seas and where the customs and manners of the Western world were unknown to the majority of the inhabitants. In that byway of civilization Lieutenant Miller, with only a nominal per diem in addition to the pay of his military rank, lived and labored for the good of a benighted people for nearly

eight years, or until May 27, 1910, when his death by accidental drowning, occurring in the performance of duty, unfortunately closed the career of a man who, by temperament, force of character, and training, was fitted to rule as a benovolent despot in a land where ignorance, treachery and tribal enmities bound the inhabitants to barbarism.

Prior to American occupation the Spanish Government had exercised control over a few of the coastal pueblos of Paragua and some of the smaller islands of this province; but the majority of the people of the larger island remained untutored and ungoverned. Undaunted by hardship and danger and almost insurmountable difficulties in attempting to exercise control over inhabitants widely distributed and differing as widely in the scale of civilization with respect to customs, characteristics, and dialects—some dwelling in the interior possessing hardly a vestige of culture—Governor Miller, by force of character and tireless effort, succeeded in winning the confidence not only of the Christianized people, who were engaged in agriculture and commerce, but also of the Tagbanuas and other nomad tribes, encouraging them wherever possible to cultivate the land, to build better houses and cease wandering from place to place, and to keep their habitations in better sanitary condition. He frequently visited the people of non-Christian rancherias, distributed writing materials, and encouraged them to use their primitive phonetic language in communicating among themselves and with him. He brought some of the boys to Puerto Princesa, the capital of the province; the smaller to learn English and the larger to learn blacksmithing and carpentry in the trades school which he had established. Wholly absorbed in his efforts to uplift the natives of the province, Governor Miller brought every available resource to the support of vocational education. "The most important instruction," he said "that can be given to the boys of this province is to teach them a trade or the principles of modern agriculture, to enable them later to make use of the resources nature has placed at the disposition of him who can work intelligently."

In the interest of the prompt administration of justice

he was a strong advocate of vesting in him as Governor limited judicial power, a function which certain British officials, commissioners in the civil service of India, possess in addition to administrative and executive duties. His confident view of the situation was expressed in the declaration, "The pagan people of Palawan (Moros excepted) are harmless and peaceful as long as they are justly treated." The Moros, scattered along the coast of Southern Paragua and living in small rancherias—a lazy, piratical class, some of whom migrated from Jolo and Borneo under pressure—were accustomed to carry into slavery the children of the hill peoples who failed to pay tribute to them. The Governor, having determined to teach the Moros a salutary lesson, led punitive expeditions composed of Philippine scouts and constabulary against their strongholds, which were destroyed after a battle which resulted in killing several Moros and securing a large number of guns and a quantity of supplies.

His profound interest and solicitude in the welfare of his people are shown in the following extract from a late report of affairs in his province:

The fleets of "samals" from Borneo and around Jolo are causing much disquietude, and I am doing all I can to discourage the cruising of these sea gypsies around this province. They have no legitimate excuse to come to Palawan. They frighten the people of the isolated villages, and have committed several minor acts of piracy.

Like a father caring for his children, he sought a remedy to prevent the abuses and suffering caused by unjust contracts entered into by innocent people in connection with securing merchandise on credit, and the satisfying of such contracts usually by the personal service of the debtor or his family.

In the interests of good government he earnestly favored the plan of placing the present inefficient municipal police under the immediate jurisdiction of the constabulary inspectors of the province, by which adequate training, discipline and efficiency could be secured.

Under his administration interest in agriculture increased, commerce developed, roadways were built, schools and other public buildings were constructed, health conditions were

improved, and crime was of rare occurrence. Conscientious and incorruptible, he never sought to enrich himself through exploitation or personal enterprise. His time and talents were wholly devoted to the common weal.

The esteem in which Governor Miller was held is expressed by a resolution of the Philippine Commission showing the value of his services and the loss sustained by his untimely death. Tact, rugged integrity, intrepid personal courage, ceaseless vigilance, and an abundance of good sense were some of his characteristics. It is no disparagement of the fair name and fame of the self-imposed exile in far Palawan to say that other Americans in the military and in the civil service in the Philippines did their full duty as soldiers and civilian officials. Every one who has thus acquitted himself has honored his fellowmen and his country's flag. Opportunity to perform unusually difficult tasks, a long period of service, or the occurrence of an untimely death has rendered the career of some notably conspicuous. In paying a tribute of respect to the memory of the late Governor Miller of Palawan, it is a pleasing duty to emphasize the fact that in character and career he was typical of a large number of splendid men who have manfully borne the white man's burden in the Philippines—some of whom will never see their own homeland. The exalted conception of duty of this high type of American has enabled him to justify his country's exercising administrative control over a dependent people for their benefit. With such conceptions of duty and service, backward races are being developed and are reaching higher levels of physical and social wellbeing. Aught else would set aside the principles of the golden rule and of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves."

The people in far distant Palawan greatly miss their benevolent Governor, but his influence will not prevail unless his successor, actuated by pure motives and possessed of high ideals, shall become their guide, protector and friend, teaching and aiding them wisely to work out their own destiny through the influence of enlightened civilization—a process

of evolution in racial character. Only honest men of action for honest ends can successfully uplift the people of a relatively undeveloped race.

Governor Miller's career is a reminder of Carlisle's impressive, vivid picture of a virile life:

"The end of man is not a thought but an action; a series of manful, faithful actions (and of modest, silent, steadfast endurances withal), which make up worthily man's life here below."